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TYPES OF INDIAN CULTURE IN CALIFORNIA

BY

A. L. KROEBER

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Only one attempt to give a systematic account of the Indians of California has been made. More than twenty-five years ago Stephen Powers wrote his famous Tribes of California, which with all its defects still stands unrivalled in comprehensiveness and usefulness, the one work on California which every anthropologist must cite. The last few years have seen more extended research of the Indians of the state. The Ethnological and Archaeological Survey of California, conducted by the Department of Anthropology of the University of California through the liberality of Mrs. Phoebe A. Hearst, is intended to secure and preserve for record as much information about the Indians, and to save for the people of the state as many of the remains and objects illustrative of native life, as possible.

From the time of the first settlement of California, its Indians have been described as both more primitive and more peaceful than the majority of the natives of North America. On the whole this opinion is undoubtedly true. The practical arts of life, the social institutions, and the ceremonies of the California Indians are unusually simple and undeveloped. There were no war for its own sake, no confederacies of powerful tribes, no communal stone pueblos, no totems, or potlatches. The picturesqueness and dignity of other Indians are lacking. In general rudeness of culture the California Indians are scarcely above the Eskimo; and whereas the lack of development of the Eskimo on many sides of their nature is reasonably attributable in part to their difficult and limiting environment, the Indians of California inhabit a country naturally as favorable, it would

seem, as might be. If the degree of civilization attained by people depends in any large measure on their habitat, as does not seem likely, it might be concluded from the case of the California Indians that natural advantages were an impediment rather than an incentive to progress.

Throughout the greater part of the state the civilization of the Indians is very much alike. While the number of groups and of divisions corresponding to tribes, and the number of languages, is large, and no two groups show exactly identical customs and beliefs, the general type of culture is uniform. The exceptions are Southern California and the northwesternmost part of the state. But the territory covered by these divergent cultures is comparatively small, and more than two thirds of the state, including all the central part, show a fundamental ethnical similarity, whose distinguishing characteristics furthermore are not found outside of the state. It is therefore possible to speak of typical California Indians and to recognize a typical Californian culture area.

A feature that should not be lost sight of in connection with the Indians of California is the great stability of population. This condition must always be given consideration in any attempt to explain the linguistic diversity existing in the state. The extraneous races that have made their way far enough into the state have been completely assimilated to the condition of life of their neighbors. The Athabascan Hupa are almost identical in culture with the non-Athabascan Yurok, the Athabascan Kato with the northernmost of the Californian Pomo. As in other regions of America, acculturation has proceeded at a more rapid rate than migration.

Throughout the typical culture area of California the Indians lived primarily on vegetable products. They were of course also hunters, especially of small game; and, wherever there was opportunity, fishermen. But it is probable that plant food formed as large a proportion of their subsistence as of any of the non-agricultural and even some of the agricultural tribes of the continent north of Mexico. The staple was everywhere acorns, but an abundance of other plant products, consisting more largely of seeds than of berries or roots, were known and eaten.

The dwellings of these California Indians were sometimes of a tolerable size, but may be described as having been huts rather than houses. Structures of brush or of tule were common. Wood was also used, but consisted of sticks, pieces of bark, and similar materials, rarely or never of split or dressed planks. Whatever part of the structure had any weight and was raised above the ground was either leaned against supports or rested on forking upright logs. The shape of the houses was conical or domed, and either thatching or a layer of earth was usually depended upon to keep out the rain. Almost all the tribes had assembly houses, generally known as sweat-houses, that were larger than the dwelling houses. Only in the regions where the use of the sweat-house was confined to sweating and sleeping and to lesser ceremonies, was it smaller than the house.

The arts were unusually primitive. Basketry alone had reached a considerable development. Pottery was unknown, except perhaps for rude attempts by some of the tribes in contact with the Shoshoneans. Rope and string were everywhere but woven textiles nowhere made within the state. Felling or large cutting implements, other than wedges of antlers, and these had a very limited use, were not employed. The art of carving was exceedingly rude. Such objects as tubular wooden pipes and small paddles for stirring semi-liquid vegetable food were made by perhaps the majority of tribes. But even these objects were not found everywhere. Pipes of reeds and soup stirrers of looped sticks were the only ones used by certain tribes of the Sierra Nevada. What carved native work there exists from California is notably deficient in ornament. The scanty decorations are simple and crude. Of realistic representation either in two or in three dimensions there appears to be virtually none beyond the patterns on baskets; and in these the conventional side in most cases far outweighs the realistic, the interpretations of designs being pattern names and not symbolism. Picture writing is foreign to the mind of the California Indian.

The social organization was both simple and loose. There was no trace of a gentile organization. Tribes can scarcely be spoken of with correctness. Beyond the family the only bases of organization were the village and the language. The villages

were often not continuously inhabited, the population being inclined to shift within confined limits. They were connected into groups of little definiteness, whose common bond was similarity of language and sometimes frequency or cordiality of intercourse, but which were without political coherence. In most cases these larger groups were without names. The village-communities almost always were named from localities. Generally the systematic classification of the divisions of any larger body of Indians is difficult on account of the lack of organization. In population and social life the village was the approximate equivalent of a localized clan, but being the largest political unit, it corresponded in a measure to a tribe.

In so simple a condition of society difference of rank naturally found but little scope. The influence of chiefs was comparatively small, and distinct classes, as of a nobility or of slaves, were unknown. There was however little communistic tendency accompanying the simplicity of social organization, for individual property rights were developed and what organization of society there was, was largely on the basis of property.

The ceremonies of California are characterized, as compared with those of the Indians of the rest of America, by a very slight development of the extreme ritualism that is so characteristic of the American Indians, and by an almost entire absence of symbolism of any kind. Fetishism is also unusual. Among the Pomo and Yokuts and perhaps other groups fetishes are used to some extent, as has been observed by Stephen Powers, but usually in connection with individual shamanistic efforts rather than with communal or tribal ceremonies. The most important ceremonies of the Maidu of the northern Sierra Nevada have been said by Dixon to be an annual mourning ceremony and the observances of a secret society. The tribal mourning ceremonial, variously known as burning, cry, or dance of the dead, seems to be found in some form among all the divisions of the main part of the state excepting the Pomo and Yuki, as well as among all the tribes of Southern California; but in the northwesternmost region of the state only faint reminiscences of it occur. Something corresponding to a secret society is also found in the greater part of the state, although in many very different forms,

to some of which the strict organization of a society can scarcely be said to belong. It seems however that there is everywhere either some ceremony conducted by a special group of men or an initiation of children or young men. The dance costumes consist primarily of feathers. They are not complex and often without delicacy, but sometimes striking. Mythological characters are at times represented. The disguise of such characters consists of feathers and paint, masks not being used.

Restrictive beliefs in regard to all phases of life, especially birth, death, names, and sexual matters, are very strongly developed in California and have led to a long series of prescribed usages and prohibitions which play as large a part in the life of the people as analagous restrictions do among the tribes of the North Pacific coast, the northern Athabascans, and the Eskimo, and decidedly more than among the tribes of the Mississippi valley or those of the agricultural southwest.

Generally speaking, the characteristics of culture that have been enumerated pertain to all the Indians between Point Concepcion and Cape Mendocino, and between this stretch of coast and the Sierra Nevada, extending from north to south from Mount Shasta to the Tehachapi range.

In the northwestern part of the state is found another type of culture, the territory of which is very much more limited. This culture centers about the lower Klamath river and extends to the south as far as lower Eel river. The Indians showing this culture most conspicuously are the Karok, the Yurok, and the Athabascan Hupa. Only these three tribes practice the socalled white-deer-skin dance. The Wishosk of Humboldt bay, the Athabascan tribes of Redwood creek and more southern streams, the Athabascan Tolowa of Smith river on the coast to the north, and the Chimariko of Trinity river to the southeast, all show more or less the same culture. Considerable traces of the same type of civilization are also found among the Shasta on the east and among the Athabascans along lower Eel river in southernmost Humboldt county. But so many typical elements of the northwestern culture are lacking among these last two groups, and they present so many resemblances on the one hand to the Indians of Oregon, Pit river, and the Sacramento valley, and on

the other to the Yuki and Pomo tribes of Mendocino county, that they may more properly be included in the larger central group. To the north the limits of the northwestern ethnical province seem to have been formed by the Siskiyou range, except along the coast, where the type of culture perhaps undergoes a more gradual transition through the various Athabascan tribes of southern Oregon. In some of their characteristics the Indians of this northwestern region of California resemble the tribes on the Pacific coast between the Columbia river and Alaska; in some respects, however, they are typically Californian; and in still other ways they have reached considerable specialization.

The subsistence of the Indians of northwestern California is less predominatingly vegetable than in the remainder of the state. Salmon constitutes perhaps as great a staple as acorns, and along the coast much dependence is placed upon sea-food. Dug-out canoes, of a distinct and unvarying type, are used in the region wherever the coast or the rivers permit navigation. While boats hewn out from logs appear to be somewhat used in other parts of northern California, yet they lack finish, and through the larger part of the state the nearest approach to a canoe has always been the boat-shaped raft of tules. The houses of the northwestern Indians also are distinctly superior to those in other parts of the state. Though they are not large, never exceeding twenty-five feet in greatest dimension, both walls and roof are made of split and hewn planks. The door is a circularly cut hole in the front, and the roof is gabled, neither thatching nor earth being used to keep out the rain. The houses are built approximately square about a smaller central pit. The sweat-house in this region is smaller than the house. It is rectangular and almost entirely below ground. It is the habitual sleeping place of the men, and while used for certain ceremonial purposes is of greater importance as a true sweat-house. It thus differs considerably from the much larger round or dome-shaped assembly houses of groups such as the Pomo or the Maidu in the central region. Throughout California heat in the sweat-house is produced directly by a smoking fire, and not by steam as is the custom over the larger part of North America.

The arts of the Indians of this northwestern region are also

more developed than those anywhere else in the state. Certain objects, such as tubular pipes, are made with nicety of finish. Acorn-soup paddles are ornamented with geometrical carving that sometimes reaches a fair degree of elaborateness. Other objects that are made only in this region in the state are hollow cylindrical purses of elkhorn, larger wooden boxes of the same shape, and elkhorn spoons with carved handles. In spite of the tolerable proficiency in carving of the Indians of this region, their ornamentation is confined almost exclusively to triangles and acute angles, and any attempt at realistic representation whether of animals or of the human figure, such as is so characteristic of the North Pacific coast, seems to be foreign to their minds. The basketry of the northwestern tribes is exclusively twined. In this respect the tribes of the extreme northeastern part of the state agree with them. Everywhere south coiled basketry not only occurs but predominates.

The dead are regularly buried in this region. Throughout the central area burning seems to be more usual, although the practice varies.

Society in northwestern California is organized only upon the basis of the family and the village. The villages are more prominent and stable than among the central Californians. The village communities might be said to represent clans, but as there is nothing resembling a totemic or gentile name and no requirement of exogamy, and as the numerous local legends refer not to the ancestors of the people of that place but to the place itself, and moreover are known to the entire group or stock and not only to the inhabitants of one village, it must be recognized that these village communities are quite different from clans such as are found among the Haida or Iroquois or Pueblos or even the Kwakiutl or the Blackfeet. It is very probable that the same type of social organization prevailed along the coast northward for some distance, and that the gentes of the Athabascans of Oregon described by J. O. Dorsey are nothing more or less than village communities.

There is in this region a reminiscence of the North Pacific coast in the importance of wealth as a factor in society. Separate classes of nobles and common people do not exist in north-

western California, but in almost all affairs of life it is the man of wealth who is the one of importance. With a consistency that would seem strange to the southwestern or eastern Indians of the United States, but intelligible to the Indians of the North Pacific coast, this prominence of wealth finds perhaps its greatest expression in ceremonials. The acquisition and retention of wealth are the chief aim in life of the Indians of this region, and connected with this are a mercenary temper and lack of truthfulness shown also by the tribes of the Pacific coast northward. A limited number of slaves were formerly held, but they invariably entered this condition of life through debt, not through capture in war. Marriage is a definitely regulated system of outright purchase. Injuries or crimes are compounded by payments. In case of war, which seems to have been carried on only by individual villages or small groups of connected villages, the conclusion of peace consisted of payment by each party for all persons killed and property destroyed on the other side. Consequently it was the victors whose payments to the inferior party were the greater, and anything like the tribute that has been mentioned as paid by certain tribes to the Hupa was an impossibility with the social organization of these groups. In place of the disk-like perforated shell beads of central California, dentalia form the chief medium of exchange in the northwestern region, but there are other classes of articles that constitute wealth. Prominent among these are woodpecker scalps, obsidian implements, and unusually colored deer skins. An important feature of difference from the tribes of the North Pacific coast is the complete absence of the potlatch or any form of gratuitous or ceremonial distribution of wealth.

Both the tribal mourning ceremony and the secret society or initiation rite are wanting among the northwestern tribes. Their most characteristic ceremonies are held only at certain localities. The religious element in them is surprisingly slight, consisting almost altogether of the ministrations of one man who has certain actions, none of them very striking, prescribed or forbidden to him. His most important function is the recitation of a formula which is little else than the myth of the origin of the dance of that place. In the dance itself almost anyone may par-

ticipate, and all parts of the ceremony in which the priest is not directly concerned are not regarded with distinct reverence. For the important men of the tribe the dance is above all else an opportunity for a display of their wealth, which is worn and carried by the dancers.

Formulas similar to those spoken for the dances exist for all ceremonies and for numerous purposes such as war, love, hunt, and fishing. They all bear the same general character, being virtually a myth relating the origin of the ceremony or action in question. These formulas are what is most sacred in the religious life of the Indians of this region. They may be compared in many respects to the karakias of the Maori. They show the great virtue attached by these tribes to words as compared with actions in matters of religion. The same tendency is revealed in the almost utter lack of visible ritualism, which is perhaps even more complete than among the central Californians. Like the central tribes the northwestern Indians show very little inclination towards mysticism or any form of symbolism even in the most sacred matters. The ceremonial and the mythical number is five or ten. In central California it is usually four.

Shamanism rests upon the same general basis of thought as elsewhere in America, but shows considerable specialization in some directions. Among at least one tribe, the Yurok of the lower Klamath river, there appears to be no definite conception of a guardian spirit or supernatural helper, an idea universal throughout the continent. Nevertheless the actions gone through both in the acquisition of shamanistic power and in its practice appear to be the same as elsewhere.

The mythologies of the northwestern and especially of the central region of California are quite different from those found in other parts of North America, and their special characteristics may be best brought out by a comparison.

The mythologies of all peoples contain an attempt to explain the world. This is true of more than the almost everpresent creation myth. Among primitive people who have not come under the influence of one of the world religions, most myths end with an account of the origin of something in nature or

among men—an animal or plant, a particular rock, a custom, an implement, the shape of an animal or the coloring of a bird. So prevalent is this tendency that it has been thought by certain scholars that mythology was primarily an attempt at science. The American Indians like other men are constantly moved by this tendency, but on the whole their accounts of the origin of the world are remarkably incomplete and incoherent. Their creation myths are undeveloped. Those of one of the highest groups, the Mexicans, are noted for their fragmentariness and inconsistency. It seems as if the impulse to give an explanation of phenomena by means of myth were ever present in the minds of the Indians, but that it is overpowered by other impulses, especially a ceremonial and a narrative one. These tendencies give form to the stories; the explanations due to philosophical tendency are incidents incorporated in the stories. In some degree this holds true even of American creation myths. Often they contain far more myth than creation. Almost all the North American Indians have an idea of the appearance of the earth after a great flood or from the primeval water. Usually this belief is connected with the idea of the successive diving of various animals to bring up earth from the bottom of the water for the formation of the world. In most cases this episode is really the most important part of the myth and the side that most interests and impresses the Indians. This is shown by the frequency with which this to us insignificant incident is told in connection with the origin of the earth; even more by the fact that the making of the earth in this way is often recounted as being a renewal, its real origin being unaccounted for; and in some cases by the degradation of the entire account of the flood, the diving, and the renewal of the world, to an incident in the life of a tricky hero.

The same lack of feeling for a systematic philosophy is evident in the absence of any comprehensive idea of the act or process of creation in American Indian myths. Primitive races like the Africans, Australians, and Andamanese have developed this conception farther, while the Polynesians and others have replaced it by the equivalent one of birth or growth. These two ideas

also run through the mythologies of the more civilized races of the old world, but in America they are lacking.

Without creation, there are no creators in America. While the readily reached abstract idea of a primary and supreme deity occasionally breaks through, it is quickly forgotten and never really enters into a mythology so as to influence it deeply. There are a number of cases of such rationalizing origin and creation myths, for instance among the Blackfeet. They are a bald recital of disconnected creations, without beginning or end, without character or plot, and in no real relation with the live body of the mythology. They differ from it in spirit and are clearly superimposed upon it.

Not only creators but gods are a conception that does not flourish among the American Indians. Distinct deities have been evolved by the more developed nations of the old world conspicuous for their mythology, such as India, Babylonia, Egypt, Greece, and Norway. Some of these deities create and some do not; but they always have character. Character is an element in mythology wherever there is true polytheism. Even mythologies of less developed races such as the Polynesians produce deities through the conception of characters. The Indian seems to have been unable to form characters as such and consequently is without real gods. His substitutes for them in ritual as well as in myth are either animals or personages distinguished by identification with colors, with directions, with substances, or with ceremonial ideas—White Shell Woman. Animal species present character ready made and ritualistic figures offer some approach to an equivalent, but it is evident that the characters obtained in this way must be of a special sort, limited in their applicability, and very difficult to bring into intimate connection with creation.

The Indian substitute for the deity is the culture hero. The god creates; by the introduction of character he can be differentiated, and the interaction of distinct deities makes god myths. The culture hero is a man; he is always alone. Where he occurs in several personages in one mythology, these are only repetitions of one another. In North and South America he is the same. Now he is more heroic, dignified, even pathetic, a benefactor and

teacher; now more inquisitive, enterprising, obscene, and ridiculous. It is a commonplace that his character varies between these qualities from episode to episode in the same mythology. But he is always a man in spirit, and he always stands alone in his world. He makes the world or remakes it from existing earth brought him by an assistant animal; he does not create it. He changes individual men, coexistent with him, to animals; he does not create the world's animals and plants. He does not create man, but finds and helps him. He is the one and the only possible character of American mythology; he is the Indian himself in his nakedness.

All the above is stated of the Indians in general, and is therefore not without exceptions. But even those specific cases that are exceptions usually rest on a wider basis that conforms with the conditions here described. The elaborate pantheon of the Bella Coola, for instance, appears to be a special and probably temporary development. While it has connection with ceremonies, the body of the myths are unaffected by the series of deities; they are ordinary American Indian myths typical of the region. This systematically worked out polytheism is in such contrast in every way with the eminently unsystematic but spontaneous body of religious belief and traditions of the Bella Coola, that its superficial and uncharacteristic part in the mythology of the people can scarcely be doubted. The array of gods of the ancient Mexicans is also of little significance. Many gods with distinguishing characters are represented in Mexican art; and they enter into the astrological ritual or calendar. For both these purposes, and no doubt for many sides of a highly developed worship, the numerous differentiated gods were a means. But there is little, and nothing consistent and connected, about these same gods in the myths. The deities of Mexican polytheism have their real existence outside of Mexican mythology.

There are different kinds of North American mythologies, as there are different cultures. But their variations all illustrate their common basis of a lack of philosophical tendency, of conceptions of creation, and of a creator-god or of gods.

The mythology of the North Pacific coast is characterized by

a class of tales of adventures with monsters and supernatural beings, many of which, as has been pointed out, are virtually identical with accounts of the acquisition of a guardian spirit. It is further characterized by clan origin legends, consisting of a narration concerning a fictitious individual not connected definitely with the present by any continuous genealogy. There is also a large class of stories dealing with the adventures of the character known as the trickster and culture hero. True creation myths are scarcely developed. Myths like the well known one of the origin of light, according to which the raven causes himself to be born as the grandson of the man who keeps the sun shut up, and obtaining it breaks the envelope and flees with the sun, do supply in some measure an explanation of the phenomena of the world. But it is evident from the character of myths such as this one that the interest of the Indians is centered more upon the pure story part of the myth, the trickery and adventures of the raven-hero, than upon any attempt at a scientific explanation of daylight and the sun. If the desire of such an explanation had been the main unconscious force shaping this myth, this explanation of the origin of one of the most prominent facts of the world would not have been subordinated to an undignified story of a person without creative power.

The myths of the Eskimo deal even less with the origin of the world. There are some cosmological ideas but almost none that are cosmogonical. Animals occur to a very limited extent. The majority of the myths are not, as among the Indians, stories of heroes with remarkable supernatural powers of a kind transcending those of men of the present day, but comparatively matter of fact experiences of persons that are evidently conceived of as in no great degree different from ordinary men; and while the supernatural of course enters largely into these tales, it is of a kind that the Eskimo believe to be practiced daily about themselves. The character of the Eskimo myths where they are not affected by contact with the Indians is very uniform and monotonous and they must be regarded as in a high degree specialized. It is remarkable how foreign the idea of explaining origin is to Eskimo thought.

Among the tribes east of the water-shed of the continent, of whom those that are now best known are west of the Great Lakes and the Mississippi, the culture hero and trickster is usually important. Though at times, as among the Blackfeet and the Arapaho, he is more or less hesitatingly identified with the creator, yet myths giving even a tolerably broad philosophy of the world scarcely occur. Those things in nature that are explained in the myths are detached and trivial. Ancestor myths like those of the Pacific coast are not found in this region and the monster and dangerous spirit myths are possessed of a somewhat different nature. Among the Indians of the North Pacific coast these myths usually take the form of accounts of dangers which threaten the hero and from which he escapes or which he overcomes. Among the Plains and other eastern tribes the idea of a monster-destroying hero is more usual. Twin heroes are common in this character. Another favorite idea is the miraculous origin of the hero. Many typical tales, such as the well-known one of Blood-clot-boy, consist of what is really a separate myth or myth-incident serving to tell the hero's origin, to which are added an indefinite series of his achievements.

The myths of the Pueblos and other tribes of the southwest are again quite different. The trickster and animal myths, including most of a romantic, personal, humorous, and obscene nature, form a separate class that has but little connection with religion. On the other hand the more sacred myths are combined into one long continuous story. This begins with the origin of the world, but from first to last is chiefly a mythical and ritualistic history of the tribe, no doubt with the occasional inclusion of actual historical events. The scientific side of this myth, in spite of its systematization and dignity, has all the incongruity and inadequacy of the philosophical attempts of other groups of Indians. The tribal and ceremonial elements eminently outweigh the cosmogonical.

Tribal migration traditions that somewhat remind one of these southwestern myths are found among a number of the eastern tribes, as among the Delaware, Creek, Cherokee, Wichita, and Hidatsa, appearing to develop most frequently where the population is sessile. They are noteworthy because nothing of a similar

nature seems ever to have developed on the Pacific coast of North America as far south as Southern California.

The Indians of northwestern California have a culture hero who resembles the corresponding character of the northern and eastern Indians of America. He is both trickster and monster-destroyer. He appears to be a true culture hero from the fact that though he is responsible for certain things in the world he is not the creator. For instance he obtains food by theft, but does not create it.

The Indians of this part of California differ somewhat among themselves in their treatment of this central figure of their mythology. In one case the trickster and the monster-ridding sides of his nature are separated and incorporated in two differentiated characters. Usually an important part of his career is his relation with his son, the incidents of which resemble those told of Kmukamtch by the Klamath Lake Indians. Among the tribes which do not possess the culture of northwestern California in its most special development, these episodes are sometimes condensed into a myth which is told of another personage than the central figure of the mythology. Sometimes the culture hero resembles somewhat the chief mythological figure, a creator, of the Indians of the rest of the state. In spite of these considerable variations, however, the culture hero as he is known on the North Pacific coast and in the east usually appears in some form among the Indians of this region.

The Indians of northwestern California have also a strongly-developed conception that a previous race is responsible for everything that exists in the world, from physical features of nature to human institutions. No connected or complete account of the origination of these things is however given. It would seem that the idea of this previous creative race is ever present in the minds of these Indians but has not been carried out either consistently or thoroughly in their myths. The belief in a previous world or existence of men-like beings, or of fabulous races of the past, is not uncommon. The Tornit of the Eskimo, for instance, possesses some of the qualities of the Ikxareya of the Karok, the Waghe of the Yurok, the Kixunai of the Hupa. Among the tribes of northwestern California there is,

however, always the underlying idea of the connection between this race and the origin of the present condition of the world, and this fundamental belief distinguishes their conception from more widely spread similar conceptions. It is believed that at the coming of mankind this earlier race either withdrew from men into the mountains and across the sea or turned into animals. In connection with this mythological idea Curtin's theory as to the fundamental nature of American creation myths will be recalled. Obvious traces of this supposed fundamental type of mythology are found everywhere, but Curtin's exposition of it applies with greater accuracy to the Indians of California than to those elsewhere in America, and in a higher degree to the tribes of northwestern California than to those of central California whose mythologies Curtin has chosen for the illustration and corroboration of his views.

Many of the northwestern myths that relate the origin of human institutions and especially of ceremonies, consist of little else than a recital or description of the actions performed by living people in the course of practicing these institutions, with the one all-important addition that it is stated that the agents in the myth are of the race of these prehuman beings. This fact according to the way of thinking of the Indians sufficiently explains the origin of anything, and is a characteristic illustration of the mode of thought which with them takes the place of our method of conceiving of creation. Among these northwestern Indians there is rarely any idea that this preceding race made or created an object or invented an institution. A plant or medicine grew among them, a ceremony was performed by one of them, and therefore these things exist and are done by men. The idea of origin consists of the association in time and space, without any causal relation, of the phenomenon explained and of the previous race. The inconsistency that the ceremonies instituted by the preceding people could not have originated the ceremonies practiced by human people, because the former fled or were transformed before the coming of men, does not trouble the Indians.

In the greater part of California outside of the northwestern region considerably different mythological ideas prevail. The

idea of a preceding distinct race analogous to humanity but by their mere existence originating phenomena, is much less clearly developed. The conception of a culture hero is also wanting. Instead of a human divinity there is almost everywhere a true creator, a god who makes. Sometimes he is a person, sometimes an animal. This creator is usually not thought of as having been entirely alone even at the very beginning. He and one or two companions are the first existing beings. Often he makes the world from primitive water. Generally he makes also mountains and rivers. Usually he creates food. Almost always he creates men, and frequently he divides them by languages and localities. He gives men their arts and occupations. In some mythologies one of his companions, the Coyote, acts in a spirit opposed to that of the deity and is the cause of the evil and imperfection in the world, which exist contrary to the original plan of the creator. Among certain groups, such as the Maidu, there is this contrast between the wise, powerful, benevolent creator and the foolish one, the Coyote; among others, such as the Yuki and the Costanoan Indians, the contrast between the two characters is somewhat changed. The Coyote is responsible for certain evils, especially death, but the greater difference between him and the creator is that the latter is the cause of the earth and of nature, of man and his physical life; to the Coyote are due the perfecting of the world, the theft of the sun and of fire from their possessors, and the human activities, the industries and practices of men. The Coyote thus takes on much the character of the culture hero; and in this connection the tricky, ridiculous, obscene side of his nature finds full expression. However much their power may be kindred or alike, the character and the functions of the Coyote and the Creator invariably differ fundamentally in the myths of the Indians of this culture area. The Creator's names are indicative of his nature. With the Yuki he is Going-alone, with the Wintun Existing-in-the-above, with the Maidu Earth-initiate or Earth-maker; where he appears in animal form it is often as the Eagle.

The typical Californian myths are often puerile and of a prosaic and realistic character that causes them to lack much of the

picturesqueness of other mythologies. But, however rude, they furnish a more consistent and complete explanation of the origin of the world and everything in it than can be found in any other region of America. The difference existing in this respect between the Californians and other Indians is illustrated by the fact that although certain of the Plains tribes have lengthy creation myths, these myths, which are eminently ceremonial and little more in many cases than a combination of unrelated myths that are independently current among the tribe, are so little known that the majority of individuals are acquainted only with fragments, whereas they may possess a tolerable acquaintance with the more characteristic myths of the tribe. In the greater part of California creation myths are not only known to every one but are generally better known than other myths. They form the center and basis of the mythology; and whereas in other regions, on the breaking up of the native ideas on contact with the whites, creation myths are the first to be affected and altered and disorganized and forgotten, wherever in California only fragments of the old beliefs survive, these fragments are first of all creation myths.

Myths other than those referring directly to the origin of the world on the whole lack specific characteristics in California. There are many that are similar to myths elsewhere on the continent; but as a class it is difficult to say anything about them. It is the creation myths that are typical of the region.

It would seem that the exceptional tendency of the California Indian to form real creation myths is not the result of a higher intellectuality which seeks and finds explanations and to which other Indians have not attained. The tendency is probably due rather to a lack on the part of the Californian of the mythological specialization which characterizes other American Indians. His creative mythology is less specifically American and of a nature pertaining more to all races in general. This quality stamps the typical native mythology of California, which is nearest to our own conceptions of any in America, as being generalized and rudimentary rather than highly developed.

A third ethnographical province in the state may be distinguished along the coast of Santa Barbara, Ventura, and perhaps

Los Angeles counties, and on the Santa Barbara islands. Most of the tribes of this area are completely extinct; and where there are a few survivors they are civilized. To form an estimate of these people we must therefore depend on the accounts of early voyagers and missionaries and the necessarily incomplete evidence of archaeology. The latter is however unusually full, this region having long been known as the richest to the archaeologist in the state. In consequence it is possible to form a fair conception of the life of these people, although it is probable that we shall remain in comparative ignorance of their thought and religion.

The houses of the Indians of this southwestern island and coast region are described as having been round and covered with vegetation or thatching, resembling those prevalent through central California. Working in wood was practiced. Wooden dishes were made and canoes were constructed from planks pieced together. Inasmuch as the tule raft was the only form of boat used along the thousand miles of coast from Cape San Lucas to Cape Mendocino except in this confined locality, the occurrence here of well made canoes is sufficient to mark off these tribes. The same is to be said of the inlaid work, of the stone bowls, and of the realistic carvings of cetaceans that have occasionally been found and to which nothing comparable is known from the entire central Californian area. Altogether the Indians of this region seem to have occupied a higher plane in the development of their arts. In this respect they resemble the tribes of the northwestern region. A similar parallelism is evident in the means of subsistence; for the island inhabitants, and even those of the mainland, seem to have depended more upon fish and sea-foods than upon the vegetable products of the land. It may also be mentioned that like the northwestern Indians they buried the dead.

As is well known, the country south of the Tehachapi range in the interior and of Point Concepcion on the coast is different in climate, in flora and fauna, and in modern sociological conditions, from the considerably larger part of the state to the north of this range. Ethnologically the same difference is maintained. Whereas northern and central California is inhab

ited by a multiplicity of small stocks of people that are confined to California and from whom only small portions of their territory seem to have been wrested by supposedly intrusive Athabascans and Shoshoneans, the territory south of Tehachapi is occupied by tribes belonging to only two linguistic stocks, both of them geographically extensive, the Shoshonean and the Yuman.

This fourth culture area seems less uniform and less defined territorially than the others in the state. To the east it shades off into the culture of Arizona and New Mexico, while on the west it is difficult to separate it sharply from the culture of the Chumash of Santa Barbara. There is considerable difference in natural environment between the tribes of the Colorado river, of the interior desert, and of the more favored coast region, and there seem to be some corresponding cultural differences. The tribes on the Colorado practice agriculture and possess an approach to a totemic gentile system, two features unparalleled in the rest of California. The Colorado tribes and at least the more southern of those on the coast also make pottery. None of them do any other than the simplest work in wood. All the tribes burn the dead and all have extensive mourning ceremonies. Among the coast tribes puberty initiation ceremonies are next in prominence after the mourning ceremonies. The Colorado tribes lack these, but have a number of curious simple singing ceremonies. None of the groups show much similarity with the Pueblo and other southwestern tribes in their ceremonials. In certain features of material culture, such as the use of pottery, the wooden-headed warclub, and the curved throwing stick, there is similarity with the southwest. On the whole the groups of the coast region, such as the missionized Diegueños, Luiseños, and Gabrieliños, stand much closer to the typical Californians than do those of the Colorado river.

The mythology of the Shoshoneans and Yumans on the coast and of the Yuman Mohaves on the Colorado show a considerable kinship in spirit and many identities of detail. The creation myths usually agree in ascribing the origin of all living things to heaven and earth. Together with men or from among them is born a hero who differs in dignity and character from the usual culture hero and has some of the characteristics of a divinity

and creator. In all the mythologies he dies, the most prevalent idea being that his death occurs in consequence of some action of the Frog. At his cremation the Coyote plays a part. This first hero is usually succeeded by a second, who may be his younger brother or an appearance of later generations. This second character originates more particularly the human institutions and on withdrawing from the people leaves them and the world in their present condition. Among the Mohave another myth is what may be called a tribal migration tradition which is very exactly localized and has much the appearance of historical truth though it is probably almost entirely mythical; it would seem that the tribes near the coast had traces of something similar.

From what has been said it would appear that about four types of native culture can be distinguished in the limits of the present state of California. The tribes of the northwesternmost part of the state are considerably specialized, and the same seems to have been the case with the inhabitants of the Santa Barbara islands and the vicinity. In southern California also the Indians are different in many ways from those in other parts of the state. In the great central and northern portion of the state, both in the interior and on the coast, there seems to prevail only one type of culture, locally diversified but presenting fundamentally the same features everywhere. Little is known about the Shoshoneans and the Washo living in the narrow strip of the state east of the Sierra Nevada. It seems likely that they differ from the more typical Californians of the central region. Their territory, however, physiographically forms part of the Great Basin and not of the Pacific coast and even politically constitutes only a fringe along an artificial boundary of the state, so that they may be disregarded in the present connection.

As is the case everywhere, there are no absolute breaks and few sharp ones between the several cultures that have been mentioned, so that the areas occupied by each cannot be very definitely circumscribed. As regards single characteristics there are many complete transitions and even identities between two or more cultures. But the general type of life and native activity in each of the several areas, in spite of such resemblances, is quite distinct.

The numerous linguistic families of California, though they must apparently still continue to be considered as generally unrelated, fall into three groups, each confined to a certain territory and containing languages of the same type of structure. In the northwest the languages are rough and complex; in the southwest they are also complex; while over the greater part of the state they are phonetically smooth and morphologically simple, case inflections taking the place of incorporation. These three linguistic areas correspond approximately to the culture areas north of Tehachapi. The agreement is not exact, for the Salinan family of the Salinas Valley linguistically shows the southwestern type in more pronounced form than the Chumash of Santa Barbara, while culturally the Salinan Indians seem to have formed part, not of the southwestern Santa Barbara area, but of the central one. Nevertheless it is quite clear that in a general way the Indians of two rather restricted areas in northwestern and southwestern California can be affirmed to have been distinct from those of the main body of the state in the character both of their languages and of their culture, presenting in both respects a greater degree of complexity and development than the majority of the Indians of the state. There is no reason to suppose any causal connection between these developments in the southwest and northwest.

Ethnologically California may be said to be characterized by the absence of agriculture and of pottery, by the total absence of totemism or gentile organization, by an unusually simple and loose social organization in which wealth plays, for a somewhat primitive and an American group, a rather important part; by the very rude development of all arts except basketry; by the lack in art of realism; by a slight development of fetishism and by the conspicuous lack of the symbolism and ritualism so highly developed by most of the American Indians; by the marked prevalence of religious restrictions connected with birth, death, sexual matters, and similar phases of life; by the predominance among ceremonials of mourning and initiation rites; and by a considerable development of true conceptions of creation in mythology. These characteristics hold true in some degree almost throughout the entire state, but in nearly every case they

are most marked in the large central region, the inhabitants of which may be justly regarded as the most typical of Californians. Hand in hand with these ethnological characteristics go the temperamental ones of an unwarlike nature and of a lack of the intensity and pride which are such strongly marked qualities of the American Indians as a whole. It will therefore be seen that in almost every instance the California Indians are, from an American point of view, negatively specialized in the direction of lacking typical American qualities, but that from the more general human standpoint they are for the same reason generalized. They are among the least characteristic of the Indians of North America.

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